

tax relief and tax reform. I've got a good partner in this effort in your Secretary.

By the way, you'll find him to be a pretty darn unusual man. *[Laughter]* He is successful. He thinks outside the box in a positive way. When given a task, he's performance oriented. He's going to expect the same of you all, but he'll be eminently fair. He will listen. He will work to build a team. That's the kind of man he is. But first things first—I got to see this first hand when I swore him in—he's got his priorities straight. He loves his family. His wife and children and grandchildren are his priority. And that's important—that's important.

We'll spend a lot of time talking about taxes right now, and by the way, I feel like we're going to have a pretty good day in the House of Representatives tomorrow. The message is slowly but surely getting out that we've got enough money coming into the Treasury to meet important obligations, but we've also got enough money to remember who paid the bills in the first place, and those are the working folks, the people who pay the taxes.

And I think we're going to have a good day tomorrow. And there will be other issues we'll be talking about: of course, the Treasury Department, and many of you work on issues relating to trade and collection; law enforcement. There's a lot of issues that take place here. But there's no bigger issue than to remember priorities in life. There's no bigger issue—the way I like to put it is this: There's no bigger issue for the President to remind the moms and dads of America, if you happen to have a child, be fortunate to have a child, your biggest priority is going to be to love your children. There's no bigger responsibility.

Some might say, "Well, that message just doesn't seem to fit in the Treasury Department." *[Laughter]* No, it fits everywhere. It fits all departments, because our jobs are to not only represent the people, but our job is to work on the collective will of the country, to uplift this country, to make sure the best is available for all who are willing to work for it. And it starts with teaching our children right from wrong.

If you find a neighbor in need, I know inside the walls here, people go out of their

way to mentor. And I want to thank you for that. If you're in your neighborhood, in your community, and you find a neighbor in need and you turn to that neighbor and say, "What can I do to help," I want to thank you for that. The greatness of America really is as a result of the collective hearts of decent, caring people.

At any rate, I love being your President. I'm honored to be on the same team that you're on. And I'm so pleased that you've got a really good man running this Department, a man who will remind you on a constant basis—a man who will remind you, and probably remind me on occasion, that it's the results that matter, that working hard is good, but that we all stand here to represent the American people.

Thank you for your hard work, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. outside Treasury Secretary Paul H. O'Neill's office.

Remarks on Departure for Fargo, North Dakota

March 8, 2001

House Vote on Tax Cut Legislation

In a couple hours, the House of Representatives will be voting on tax relief. I'm confident they'll do the right thing. The message is loud and clear that we've got ample revenues to fund our priorities, to pay down debt, to set aside money for a contingency, and ample revenues to send money back to the people who pay the bills, the taxpayers. I strongly believe, and I hope the House of Representatives sends the message, that the people of America are overtaxed and deserve a refund. I'm looking forward to hearing the verdict of the vote.

I'm also looking forward to continuing my trip around the country. We're off to North Dakota and South Dakota and Louisiana, and the message is the same: When you have a President and a Congress that works together to set priorities, to set the focus of the country on important matters when it comes to spending, when we stop the growth, the rapid escalation of the growth of the Federal

budget, we can meet priorities and have meaningful, real tax relief. And it's needed.

It's needed not only to provide a kick-start to our economy; it is needed because many Americans today are struggling to make ends meet. And so I'm confident the Congress will do the right thing.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. on the South Grounds at the White House.

Remarks at North Dakota State University in Fargo *March 8, 2001*

The President. Thank you very much. The air may be cold, but the reception is unbelievably warm. Thank you all for that warm reception. Governor, thank you very much. I appreciate you and Mikey meeting me at the airport. It's good to see public servants, such as your Governor, who are willing to do what they think is right. He follows the footsteps of a good friend of mine, a man who did a fine job as the Governor of North Dakota over the past years, and that's Ed Schafer. It's good to see Ed here, as well.

I don't want to jump the gun on my speech here, but I just got off the phone with the Speaker of the House. He informed me that the House of Representatives just took a major vote on—a vote on a major portion of my tax relief package, and by the margin of 230 to 198, the tax rate cut passed the House of Representatives. The American people—the American people had a victory today. The American family had a victory today. The American entrepreneur had a victory today. One House down, and now the Senate to go.

I'm here for a lot of reasons. One is to ask for your help. I wasn't sure how many folks were going to show up to hear a budget speech. It seems like a lot of people are interested in the national budget and, more particularly, your own personal budgets. And so I'm here to ask for you—if you like what you hear today—to maybe e-mail some of the good folks from the United States Senate from your State. If you like what you hear, why don't you just give them a call or write them a letter and let them know that the

people are speaking. You see, one of the important things for the President, if the truth be known, people who hold Federal office, to make sure you get out of Washington, DC, on a regular basis.

It is important to make sure you get outside the DC scene and listen to the people. I'll tell you, I love traveling our country. I'm so proud to be landing in Air Force One and getting off the airplane and driving into this hall and seeing people lining the streets, waving at the office of the President. It makes me proud to be your President. Now, they wave because they respect the office. And sometimes, at least in this State, it seems like the people like the occupant, too. It's a huge honor to be your President. It's a huge honor.

One of the things I hope the people figure out about me is that I like to bring commonsense approaches to our Government. Take budgeting. It seems like we need to have a commonsense approach on how we spend the people's money, which means it's important to set priorities. You set priorities in your family budgets; the Federal Government ought to set priorities with your money.

Let me describe some of our priorities. Educating our children is a priority. But lest you think I forgot where I came from, I want you to understand I firmly believe that the people who are best able to run the schools in North Dakota are the citizens of North Dakota. I believe in strong—mine is an administration—mine is an administration that strongly supports local control of schools. But we also understand in Washington that we need to set high standards, that every child, regardless of his or her background, can learn, that we must have the highest of high expectations, and that we must work with States and local jurisdictions to measure so that we know whether or not we're leaving any child behind in America today.

Not only today do we have good news out of the House of Representatives, but the Senate Education Committee passed our education reform package 20 to 0. We're making progress because these pieces of legislation are right for America. These aren't political documents; this is public policy that's good for American families and American children. So education is one of our priorities.